

## Story of the Fair Trade Giveaway Item

1 of 1

FACE THE FAST

This year's Food Fast giveaway item is a soapstone pendant made by artisans working with Nyabigena Soapstone Carvers Cooperative in Kenya. The pendant is fairly traded, meaning that the artisans earn a fair price for their products, receive access to credit and training, and maintain long-term relationships with CRS' partner, SERRV.

Kisii, a city in western Kenya, is surrounded by soapstone quarries and is well-known both for the quality of its soapstone and the skill of its carvers. Nyamarambe, a small village near Kisii, is the home of the 120-member Nyabigena Soapstone Carvers Cooperative. This civic-minded group has been providing work for its members while also giving back to its community.

A source of great pride for the cooperative is the Nyabigena Mixed Day Academy, an elementary school which opened in January 2007. Using the proceeds from the sale of soapstone crafts, the school can now educate 150 students.



*Photo courtesy of SERRV*

The cooperative has also sponsored a women's literacy program, a project which supports school dropouts. In addition, the group set up two wells which are providing clean water and saving women from making long walks to gather water.

"I am very happy for the work I get, especially from SERRV. The steady work and prompt payments helped me to improve the living standards of my family. I hope to receive more work, so my life and the lives of my children will change even more and more for the better." —Patrick Ombui, soapstone carver and father of five